

# THE PROBLEM OF INDIVIDUATION IN SCOTUS AND OTHER FRANCISCAN THINKERS OF OXFORD IN THE 13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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The purely and pre-eminently philosophical problem concerning the ultimate constitutive element of individual reality is either totally neglected or only partially treated by modern philosophers. From this, however, it cannot be inferred that due and sufficient importance should not be accredited to this problem. No true philosopher, worthy of the name, would dare deny that this problem stands in a most intimate correlation with another strictly philosophical question, namely the gnoseological problem, to which no valid solution could be given, if we ignored the very metaphysical structure of a singular being.

Without doubt, the major concern of every real philosophy should be with being as such, considered in itself. The singular and contingent aspect of reality, in so far as it constitutes the proper object of the positive sciences, does not and cannot, in actual fact, bear the only and essential significance for philosophy. Nevertheless, since the more universal aspect of reality must necessarily include the singular aspect for its legitimate and valid realisation in the order of things, that philosophy which is preoccupied only with the abstract universal - discarding completely any investigation of the concrete and particular being - merits no credit at all. On the other hand, non-philosophical should be estimated any speculation which restricts its investigation only to the singular and concrete notes of reality, without making due stress on the more abstract and universal aspect. Every being, which 'exists in the physical order as an individual, even though it is aptly distinguished from universal being, lies in a most close and intimate connexion with it. For this reason, any apprehension of singular reality ought to be branded as inadequate and insufficient,

unless it be elevated to the nature of universal reality, to which the very concrete individual is strictly correlated.

From this simple consideration, it can easily and clearly be deduced that the proper, specific object of philosophy is real being. The axis about which all philosophical questions revolve is reality, which at first sight presents itself as something very complex and obscure, made up of many various other real elements. But this same reality, when diligently and accurately examined by mental reflection, reveals itself as something so logically constituted in its particular aspects that it unfolds a most remarkable unity. And it is precisely here, under the light of these present speculations, that the problem of radical and absolute individuation presents itself. Undoubtedly, it should be incumbent on every true philosophy to seek the principle of such individuation and to find out what are the essential constituents of such a principle, in virtue of which every being is perfectly constituted in itself as individual unity. Here indeed lies a metaphysical problem, which though neglected by most modern philosophers still possesses paramount importance in the purely rational and theoretical field.

The problem of the individuation of things was discussed with the greatest possible ardour in the 13th century. If we are to reconcile the stability and abiding identity of essences with the endless diversity and wonderful variety of their individual realisations in nature, whence and how does it come that there are innumerable individuals in one and the same species? Here we have a scholastic controversy 'par excellence', for it presupposes, at least in a certain measure, the peripatetic solution of the problem of universals. The question of universals was practically decided before the 13th century. Scholasticism unanimously accepted the conclusion arrived at in the 12th: «The individual is the real substance; the universal derives its ultimate form through the subjective work of the mind». The most subtle dialecticians, not excepting John Duns Scotus himself, with all his daring differences of view, take no exception to those scholastic conclusions. All the medieval philosophers admitted that within any species the basis of individuation ought to be essential and intrinsic, but difference of views arose as soon as the question was asked whether it is the matter or the form, or the union of both principles, that accounts for the individuation of things.

In these few pages we have in mind to deal briefly with the various solutions given to the problem by the Franciscan thinkers of Oxford University in the 13th century, namely Thomas of York, John Pecham, Roger Bacon, Richard of Middleton and John Duns Scotus. The doctrine of Scotus will of course merit our special consideration firstly because amongst all scholastics he is always cited as one of the most representative of the period having treated the problem of individuation 'ex professo'; secondly because his solution has to its credit the evident advantage of transforming the Greek man into a Christian. In fact, we shall ascertain that the supreme value of the individual, which in Greek philosophy had lost completely its significance, is radically reaffirmed and restored to its pristine dignity in the philosophical teachings of the Subtle Doctor<sup>1</sup>.

### I. - THOMAS OF YORK

Amongst Thomas's philosophical works, that which is of particular interest to us is the *Sapientiale* in which he treats the problem of individuation 'ex professo'. Thomas objects to the arguments for *matter* as the principle of individuation, supported by the authority of Aristotle, making allusions to the Stagirite<sup>2</sup>. His reasoning shows clearly that individuation cannot arise through the material principle, and in refuting this solution he supports the opinion of those who maintain that *form* is the principle of individuation. Accordingly he thus expresses himself:

«Matter does not have any proper form, otherwise it would not be in potency to receive all forms... Even the form of the species is common... consequently, if this were simply added to common matter, that which results would still be something common; hence, besides the form of the species there must be either another proper form in itself particular, which contracts common matter to singularity, or some other quantitative matter, which contracts the common form to singularity»<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> GILSON E., *Lo spirito della filosofia medievale*. Traduzione della 2<sup>a</sup> ed. francese di SARTORI TREVES P., Brescia 1947, 136.

<sup>2</sup> These and other similar passages are found in the *Sapientiale*, a work still inedited which however is often cited by SHARP D. E., *Franciscan philosophy at Oxford in the thirteenth century*, London 1930, 82ss.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. SHARP, *op. cit.*, 82.

Thomas subsequently demands which of these two alternatives corresponds more to the truth, and whilst rejecting the second, he supports the first as the more reasonable.

Thomas undoubtedly defends the opinion of those philosophers who explain the individuation of beings through the formal principle and consequently, according to Gilson, he can rightly be considered as the fore-runner of Duns Scotus, who as we shall see later, in his previous works sought the principle of individuation in form<sup>4</sup>. If form is the principle of individuation, it will also give unity to the composite, and this it can do because it was created by the first Unity and endowed with the characteristics of being in itself indivisible but having the power to effect multitude. Yet, inasmuch as matter receives form, it too must make a certain contribution to the unity of the composite, though a lesser one because it is multipliable and divisible «in se», while form is divisible «per accidens»:

«Materia non est illud unum simplex et primum ex cuius numeratione fiunt entia in effectu... sed radicalis actio numeralis est ex forma»<sup>5</sup>.

From this short study, therefore, we can easily synthetise the whole doctrine of Thomas in the assertion that the individuation of all created things should be sought in the formal principle.

## II. - JOHN PECHAM

It was during the time of his teaching at Paris that John Pecham composed his Commentary on the book of *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. In this work Pecham treats explicitly the much discussed question of the individuation of being<sup>6</sup>. John's doctrine on this subject is so close to that of St. Bonaventure, that we can rightly consider him the only Franciscan scholar who can easily be drawn towards the Seraphic Doctor.

Setting forth his proper notions of matter and form, Pecham condenses his doctrine of individuation in these few words:

<sup>4</sup> Cf. GILSON, *op. cit.*, 349.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Sapientiale*, in SHARP, *op. cit.*, 83.

<sup>6</sup> DELORME F.M., *Ioannis de Pecham «Quodlibet Romanum»*, Romae 1938, p. XIX.

«Nec materia est tota causa individuationis, cum materia ponatur una in multis; sed complementum individuationis est a forma».

From a simple consideration of these words, one can easily deduce that according to our author the principle of individuation derives from both matter and form. However, to grasp the real sense of Pecham's doctrine we must compare the above text with the following passage:

«Petrus et Paulus convenient in specie vel in substantia communia speciei, et differunt in substantia individuali»<sup>7</sup>.

Now it is beyond all doubt that this 'substantia individualis' is composed of its proper matter and its proper form.

Pecham inquires also into the individuation of spiritual substances, especially the human soul. Composed of matter<sup>8</sup> and form, the rational soul contains within itself the two causes contributing to its individuation. Certainly the body could not be the cause of such individuation, for while the soul possesses a natural inclination to its body, the multiplication of bodies is only the occasion for God's creation of souls and their immediate infusion in singular bodies.

### III. - ROGER BACON

Another interesting representative of the Franciscan School at Oxford in the 13th century is Roger Bacon, referred to as the «Doctor Mirabilis». Bacon examines the problem of individuation in *Quaestiones super libros I-V Physicorum Aristotelis*, *Communia Naturalium* and *Metaphysica*. He suggests that three solutions are proposed for the problem of individuation, each of which is then critically examined by him together with his own objections and observations<sup>9</sup>. According to him neither the universal, nor something added to it, can constitute the entirely different essence of the indi-

<sup>7</sup> Since the work is still inedited, see SHARP, *op. cit.*, 183-184.

<sup>8</sup> Pecham seems to be alluding to Boethius who in his work *De unitate et uno* speaks of this matter.

<sup>9</sup> ROGERUS BACON, *Communia Naturalium* I (ed. STEELE R., Oxonii 1935, 98, 35): «Species est tota essentia individuorum et habet esse solum diversa [sic] in eis; materia addita formae universali facit individuum; potentia ad speciem sicut ad signationem [sic] additur, et sic signatur in diversis».

vidual which is related to the universal as subject to accidents. Consequently he thus expresses himself in one of his objections:

«*Principia propria ingredientia essentiam individui faciunt ipsum, ut haec anima et hoc corpus faciunt hunc hominem, sicut anima et corpus faciunt hominem»*<sup>10</sup>.

The individuating principles in a thing are therefore its individual matter and its individual form.

Some authours such as De Raeymaeker<sup>11</sup> and Woestyne<sup>12</sup> enumerate Bacon among those Schoolmen who proposed matter as the principal factor of individuation. Their opinion is corroborated in this passage from Bacon:

«*Concedo quod antonomastice et maxime est materia causa individuations; materia est causa originalis et completissima magis individuationis quam forma»*<sup>13</sup>.

In defending Bacon some interpreters think that in the work *Communia Naturalium* the author is discussing individuation from the standpoint of the natural philosopher, and that hence he is justified in holding that because individual matter and individual form constitute the individual, they may be regarded as causing individuation<sup>14</sup>. Against this defence three suggestions may be proffered: a. the theories enumerated and criticised by Bacon in opening the problem are not those of natural philosophy, and even if this were Bacon's approach, surely as a physicist, he would have to ask himself: «How is it that many distinct individuals can possess the same specific perfection?»; b. although the chapter is headed «*De causa individuationis*», the procedure throughout implies that Bacon was thinking of the problem of individuation in regard to both its remote and proximate causes; c. the view that individual matter and form are the proper principles of individuation was the inevitable outcome of Bacon's extreme realism, which, confusing the logical with the ontological order, posited grades in the

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 99, 17.

<sup>11</sup> DE RAEYMAEKER L., *Metaphysica generalis*, II, Lovanii 1935, 381.

<sup>12</sup> VAN DE WOESTYNE Z., *Scholae franciscanae aptatus cursus philosophicus*, II, 2<sup>a</sup> ed., Mechliniae 1933, 229.

<sup>13</sup> *Quaestiones supra libros Primae Philosophiae Aristotelis* (ed. STEELE R., 231, 27).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. BAEUMKER CL., *Roger Bacons Naturphilosophie*, in *Franziskanische Studien* 3 (1916) 115ss.

individual perfections of the singular, as well as in its universal perfections.

P. Duhem<sup>15</sup> gives a brief account of Bacon's treatment of individuation, in which he shows that Roger never grasped the problem clearly. At first Roger believes that he is agreeing with Aristotle in regarding matter as the efficient cause of individuation; then he retracts this opinion and holds that both individual matter and individual form cause individuation; lastly he returns to matter as the cause of individuation, and taking individuation and unity to be identical, argues that unity is quantity and proceeds from the nature of matter. Hence he concludes that beings without matter have no numerical individuation but only specific.

#### IV. - RICHARD OF MIDDLETON

Richard holds in common with the foregoing Franciscan thinkers that the human soul is an 'individuum' («hoc aliquid»), and that consequently the problem of individuation must be extended to spiritual substances as well, since they do not exclude multitude in one and the same species<sup>16</sup>.

Richard condemns in an explicit way the theory for matter as the principle of individuation<sup>17</sup>. If the Stagirite maintains that a generator generates another one on account of matter, he only means to say that matter is a condition 'sine qua non' for every generation. Hence, Richard, like Pecham, declares that matter may be a necessary constituent but not the cause or principal factor of individuation.

One may rightly say that Richard seems to regard *existence* as the principle of individuation<sup>18</sup>. For him individuation is the negation of divisibility, a property acquired when the composite, as a union of matter and form, comes into existence. He does not actually say that existence is the cause of individuation, but no other doctrine can be deduced from his treatment of the problem<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. DUHEM P., *Le système du monde*, V, Paris 1913-1917, 399.

<sup>16</sup> RICH. DE MEDIAVILLA, *Sent.* II d. 3 a. 5 q. 1 (ed. LUD. SILVESTRI A SANCTO, Brixiae 1591, 60-61).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* a. 3 q. 2.

<sup>18</sup> DE RAEYMAEKER, *op. cit.* 394.

<sup>19</sup> Richard thus writes in *Sent.* I d. 24 a. 1 q. 2 (p. 218): «Unitas humanae speciei est ipsa species humana sub ratione qua indivisa in plures species;

Perhaps it is because the existence of the composite is due primarily to form that Richard seems to revert to the individual form when he says:

«Res est singularis per suam propriam essentiam sub ratione qua indivisibilis, salva integritate sua; et hoc modo si Deus faceret actu aliquam formam sine materia, illa esset singularis»<sup>20</sup>.

This alternative view seems preferable to that of individuation as an indivisibility conferred on the species by existence.

About the individuation of the human soul Richard does not speak at length. If the soul has an independent and incorruptible nature, it must be a substance, and being a substance it must be composed of matter and form. Because the spiritual matter in the soul makes it to be a substance, the soul contains its own principle of individuation within itself; and this means that each soul is an incommunicable determination of the specific human nature. He declares erroneous the view of Avicenna that the body is the individuating principle: because the body was made on account of the soul, its priority of execution does not involve as well a priority of intention. For Richard the soul is individuated by God in virtue of its own essence and then infused into a body indifferent to every soul; only after the infusion does the body acquire an adaptation to its own soul. Similarly, that inclination towards a particular body, which is created with the essence of the soul, is perfected only after the union of the soul with its body<sup>21</sup>.

#### V. - JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

So great is the desire on the part of a Christian thinker to vindicate and put on a secure basis the subsistence and originality

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unitas vero numeralis quae convenit Petro vel Ioanni, quae proprie dicitur unitas individualis, ponit super essentiam rationem individuationis sua, quae individuatio super essentiam numero unam, ponit aliquid ab eo differens secundum rem vel rationem, quia ponit actualem exsistentiam. Eo enim ipso quod res exsistit actu, una numero est. Unde Avicenna dicit... quod esse est de essentia unitatis. Unde si actualis exsistentia nihil reale addit absolutum super essentiam substantiae creatae, ut multi dicunt, tunc illud positivum quod addit praedicta unitas super essentiam substantiae creatae non differt ab ea secundum rem, sed secundum rationem vel intentionem. Quia tamen ens in actuali exsistentia dicit compositionem ex actuali essentia et actuali exsistentia, ideo unum super tale ens nihil addit positivum, sed tantum negationem divisionis».

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* a. 3 q. 4 ad 5 (p. 313).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* II d. 17 a. 1 q. 2 ad 2 (p. 215).

of the individual that Duns Scotus spares no effort in the pursuit of such a noble purpose. Happily no uncertainty exists concerning the authentic character of the works in which he treats professedly the much discussed question of individuation. These are the *Ordinatio*, the *Reportatio* and the *Quaestiones in libros Metaphysicorum*. That in the *Ordinatio* Scotus did actually treat about individuation can easily be proved from this simple observation. In the *Ordinatio* I d. 7 n. 87 (IV 146), a text occurs wherein he persuades the reader that the doctrinal point in question will be dealt with by him more vigorously in the discussion about individuation: «Hoc magis patebit in quaestione 'De individuatione'». Moreover the Scotist Commission has already indicated that the Subtle Doctor discusses our problem in the *Ordinatio* II d. 3 q. 1 n. 3-6. 7.

Individuality is looked upon by Scotus as the ultimate perfection of metaphysical substance, its ultimate consummation and truly its plenary actuality<sup>22</sup>. The supreme perfection of the individual being is very well expressed in these words of his *Metaphysica*:

«Individuum est verissime ens et unum, sicut arguitur hic de prima substantia quod est maxima substantia et ipsius est generatio et circa ipsam sunt operationes, ipsa etiam operatur»<sup>23</sup>.

It is precisely because of this supremacy of the individual that Scotus goes into the problem of individuation at great length.

From the initial consideration of the theory of Boethius which assumes as the essential notes of every individual, numerical unity and indivisibility in parts, Scotus immediately becomes aware that the whole question of individuation lies here: what is the proximate and intrinsic foundation of this repugnance to division into subjective parts<sup>24</sup>?

Before giving his proper teaching Scotus subjects to his criticism the various solutions already given to the problem. Nominalism attempts to solve the problem without importing any negative or positive factors. Material substances are individuated «per se», for that which gives reality to a substance is the same as that which gives individuality. Any nature existing apart from

<sup>22</sup> ABRAGNANO N., *Storia della filosofia*, I, Torino 1949, 509.

<sup>23</sup> *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 2 n. 4.

the mind, necessarily includes singularity, just as any nature in the soul is of necessity universal. Hence we should not ask the cause of singularity, for such a question implies that a nature first exists and afterwards becomes singular. The only possible cause of its singularity would be the four causes which brought it into existence, the intrinsic causes being matter and form, the extrinsic being efficient and final causes. To the whole theory Scotus objects that every nature of itself is indifferent to singularity and universality. To become the former it must be contracted; to become the latter the intellect must confer on it that characteristic. Of itself the nature is merely a type of unity less than numerical; if this be not granted, we are left with a world composed of isolated things without any basis of comparison, which is equivalent to saying that we have a completely unknowable world<sup>25</sup>.

Since the individual nature cannot be due to a negation, could something positive be the cause of individuation? Yes, says Scotus, but not existence or accidents or matter.

That the actual existence of human nature, for example, is the formal reason for contracting that nature to individual being, has been supported on the ground that Aristotle in his Metaphysics says that act determines and distinguishes, and therefore ultimate determination ought to follow on the ultimate act which is existence. To this Scotus objects that what is not of itself distinct cannot distinguish another, and obviously the «esse» of existence is not of itself distinct from the «esse» of essence, for it has no proper «differentiae» apart from those of essence. Consequently as the fact of existing is not what differentiates individuals, the ground of the distinction between existing individuals must lie in their essence<sup>26</sup>.

Accidents cannot be the cause of individuation because they presuppose something prior in nature, and this something, as Aristotle says, is substance. Besides, a cause cannot receive its causative principle from its effect, for then the effect would be its own cause. In reality, the first necessary condition in a substance for the causation of accidents is singularity<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* d. 12 q. 1 n. 2-10.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* d. 3 q. 3; *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 4 n. 5; *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 3 and 4.

We now come to the criticism put forth by Scotus against those philosophers who, following in the footsteps of the Angelic Doctor, seek the principle of individuation either in matter or in the attribute of quantity. Matter is categorically excluded as the cause of individuation because that which of itself is indistinct and indeterminate cannot constitute a distinguishing principle. As mere potency, matter will be the same in nature in every individual, or at least its distinction will follow that of form and not vice-versa<sup>28</sup>. In the same way, quantity according to Scotus cannot be the principle of the individuation of being. Quantity being an accident cannot in any way modify a thing in its substantial unity, e.g. a change in the quantity of an object does not mean a change in its individuality. Moreover, quantity itself possesses its own quiddity and as such is 'secundum se' entirely indifferent to individuals<sup>29</sup>.

It is now necessary to say something about Scotus's positive contribution to our problem. Scotus fully agrees with those philosophers who affirm that the principle of individuation should be sought in a positive entity. He thus expounds his mind:

«Necesse est per aliquod positivum intrinsecum huic lapidi, tamquam per rationem propriam, repugnare sibi dividi in partes subjectivas; et illud positivum erit quod dicitur esse per se causa individuationis...; et per individuationem intelligo istam indivisibilitatem sive repugnantiam ad divisibilitatem»<sup>30</sup>.

But how are we to conceive such a positive entity? In his work *Quaestiones in libros Metaphysicorum* Scotus makes it to be a kind of a last individual form limiting the determinability of the specific nature to singularity<sup>31</sup>. In his other works the Subtle Doctor declares that the individuating positive entity is neither matter nor form nor the composite in so far as any of these is a nature; but

<sup>28</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 5 n. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 2 n. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 13: «Illud 'quod quid est' speciei non est idem cum individuis simpliciter, quia addunt super illud formam individualem». Afterwards in n. 15 he thus proceeds: «'Quod quid est' speciei est idem cum specie simpliciter, sed non est idem cum individuo sed quodammodo pars eius, cum individuum addat super eam formam individualem...; non sequitur quod eadem forma sit in generante et in genito, sed forma specifica est una amborum, non individualis». Then n. 16 he thus concludes: «Natura quam ego pono determinatur ad unitatem numeralem per formam individualem».

it is the ultimate reality of the being which is matter or form or a composite thing<sup>32</sup>. Scotus admits that it is impossible to say definitely what the individuating positive entity is. We have a vague intuition of it, but we cannot define it, for that which we define is applicable to every individual in that particular species, and the point of individuality is its repugnance to other beings<sup>33</sup>. The fault does not lie in the individual, since this is perfectly intelligible in itself, but rather in the weakness of our intellect due to sin. Hence it can only be said that this positive entity or «haecceitas»<sup>34</sup> or «thisness» is that which contracts the species making it to be one in number, incommunicable and «per se existens».

According to Scotus this positive entity or «haecceitas» is formally distinct from specific nature and this means that though the two cannot be included in the same concept, they cannot exist apart from each other. The distinctive note or character of this ultimate perfection or entity can clearly be inferred from this passage in his *Metaphysica*:

«In Socrate enim non solum secundum considerationem intellectus sed secundum ordinem naturalem perfectionum unitive contentarum, prius est animal quam homo, et homo quam 'hic homo'; quod patet ex operationibus propriis»<sup>35</sup>.

The impossibility on the part of this positive entity to exist independently and separately from the specific form is thus expressed by our author:

«Si loquimur realiter, humanitas quae est in Socrate non est humanitas quae est in Platone, et est realis differentia ex differentiis individualibus unitive contentis, inseparabilibus hinc inde»<sup>36</sup>.

Consequently the specific nature and the positive entity in individuals are not two actualities existing independently.

<sup>32</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 6 n. 15: «Et si quaeras quae est ista entitas individuallis, ... respondeo: ... ista entitas non est materia vel forma, nec compositum, in quantum quodlibet istorum est natura, sed est ultima realitas entis, quod est materia vel quod est forma, vel quod est compositum».

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* n. 17; *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 13.

<sup>34</sup> The word «haecceitas» is not used for the principle of individuation in the *Ordinatio*, though it is used in the *Reportatio* II d. 12 q. 5 n. 1, 8, 13, 14, and in the *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 9 and 26. It is therefore most probable that this entity was given such a name by the Scotists.

<sup>35</sup> *In Metaph.* VII q. 13 n. 19.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* n. 21.

Scotus's doctrine of the individuation of the soul shows a marked departure from Aristotle. That the body as matter could not individuate the soul is clear from his objections to matter as the principle of individuation and also from this passage in the *Quodlibet*:

«*Distinctae sunt istae animae prius natura quam uniantur materiae; non ergo per se et primo distinguuntur sua materia*»<sup>37</sup>.

Moreover, that an inclination to the body could not individuate the soul is a logical consequence of his affirmation that the cause of individuation cannot be sought in accidents. Therefore, it appears that the soul, like other beings, bears within itself its individuating principle<sup>38</sup>.

The teaching of Scotus regarding the individuation of the human soul can be undoubtedly applied also to angelic substances, since these too are themselves pure forms.

As already pointed out Scotus's solution to the problem of individuation made it possible for the individual to regain that importance which it had completely lost in Greek philosophy. For Plato the only subsistent realities are concepts which exist in a divine world separate from the mind and material things; the individual does not really exist and is only intelligible in so far as it participates in the world of Ideas, it is just a likeness of the Idea. Similarly Aristotle considers as intelligible only forms or essences (the universal); the individuum is entirely beyond intellectual cognition. Hence we can rightly deduce that the supreme and unique preeminence of individuality and personality which is a necessary postulate of every Christian philosophy cannot in any way be reconciled with these assertions of ancient Greek philosophy. In Christian philosophy the individuum had to be once again enriched with all due metaphysical entities in order to become the centre and foundation of philosophical speculation. To this noble end the mind of Scotus is specially directed when he discusses the problem of individuation. His doctrine of the «haecceitas» or the

<sup>37</sup> *Quodl.* q. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ord.* II d. 3 q. 7 n. 4: «*Animae intellectivae distinguuntur numero in eadem specie, et tamen sunt formae purae, licet perfectivae materiae; igitur non est impossibilitas a parte formarum quod distinguantur numero in eadem specie*».

ultimate positive entity in singular being exalts the value of the individuum above that of the species. Individuality is according to Scotus the last perfection of every individual substance and as such is a necessary element for its full and complete realisation in the order of things. If the individuum then is a being more perfect than specific essence it should be endowed with greater unity and consequently greater truth and greater goodness. The individual substance becomes knowable in itself; and if our intellect cannot comprehend all its intrinsic metaphysical riches in their integrity, this is not due to the «unintelligibility» of singular substance but rather to the limitations and imperfections of our mind due to sin. God, however, whose mind is infinite knows such a substance and by a free operation of His mind directs it to its proper end. Logically, we can aptly conclude that with this doctrine of individuation in Scotus due metaphysical value was restored to the individual such as had never before been attributed to it by any scholastic tradition.